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OFFICE OF THE
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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SUBJECT: Response to Mr. Wolfowitz's Question on Recent Statements by Ayatollah Montazeri Regarding the Legitimacy of Suicide Acts

Posted below is FBIS/Iran-Afghan Program's response to Mr. Wolfowitz's question on recent statements by Ayatollah Montazeri regarding the legitimacy of suicide acts. It is based exclusively on the content and behavior of selected foreign public media and is issued without coordination with other U.S. Government components.

Media monitored by FBIS have not contained a fatwa by Ayatollah Montazeri indicating suicide bombers are acting against Islam. The following translation includes the most recent statements by Montazeri monitored by FBIS.

Ayatollah Montazeri's Message In Support Of the People of Palestine

Tehran Nowruz in Persian, 22 April 02, p 11

[Source descriptor: Reformist daily headed by Mohsen Mirdamadi, Majles deputy and member of the reformist Islamic Iran Participation Front (IIPF).]

Political group: Ayatollah Montazeri issued a message supporting the people of Palestine and condemning Israeli attacks on them. A portion of the statement reads as follows:

The number of Moslems in the world is over a billion and the number of Zionists is nothing compared to that. Unfortunately, the political and economic power of Islamic countries is controlled by those who are intimidated by the great world powers. Although they have all the opportunities, they do not have the power to make decisions and do not feel enough responsibility to act. All their actions, political comings and goings, discussions, and conferences are nothing but talk and slogans.

One of the major economic pillars of great powers is the oil and energy that Islamic countries possess. Why is it that the leaders of Islamic countries are not willing to cooperate and plan to effectively use the power that God has bestowed upon them -- even as a temporary measure?

Do people have any other choice but to resort to suicide acts when they are deprived of opportunities, their homes and existence are stolen from them, and they are under the aggressive and savage attacks of the enemy while leaders of countries and global organizations, as well as international agencies, have nothing to offer but words and slogans?

The oppressed people of Palestine seek the help of all those in power, especially the leaders of Islamic countries. According to the Prophet's tradition, anyone who does not fulfill their [Palestinians'] request is not a Moslem. How would the powerful Moslems answer to the Moslem nation and God and his Messenger on the day of judgment when they are not prepared to suspend their political and economic relations with the Zionist regime, even on a temporary basis?

The country of Palestine belonged to its inhabitants, and for centuries Jews, Christians, Moslems, and the Druze lived in harmony together. However, after the World War and the domination of that country by England, it was decided to create a Zionist state there. The Zionists were able to purchase approximately one-sixth of the Palestinian land. Subsequently, through colonial aggression; the massacre of the Palestinians and making them homeless; and the gathering of Jews from Europe, America, Russia, and

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Africa with the help of the United Nations about fifty percent of the land was taken over and called Israel. They are not even satisfied with this and now they plan to occupy land from the Nile to the Euphrates.

This country was established by means of murder and terror, and they still operate in the same way. Unfortunately, the government of America that has also been attacked by terrorists, under the guise of fighting terrorism, supports this country [Israel] and ignores the rights of the people of Palestine who are the true owners of the land. However, a just cause is never subject to the statute of limitation.

In another portion of the message he states: It is utter cruelty and insult to the oppressed people of Palestine if the tyrannical government of Israel becomes dominant and the true owners of Palestinian land become its dependents with a weak "self-ruling" government. At the very least, the Palestinians should have an independent government with all the powers and forces and defensive mechanisms and opportunities with its capital at Holy Qods [Jerusalem]. In this regard, the Islamic nations should help them, and the land occupied by Israel should be returned to them. This will benefit both Palestinians and the Israelis.

Of course, it would be best, if a popular government could be established for the entire territory of Palestine on the basis of popular vote. Unfortunately, with all the bloodshed and animosity that has taken place during more than fifty years it is difficult to expect such a thing to happen.

We pray to God, the All Mighty, to enable all his servants to act according to their humane, divine obligations, and resolve all difficulties and inhumane conflicts.

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